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ABSTRACT

Project RISE (Regional In-Service Education) is an inservice center serving teachers, administrators, support staff and parents in central Connecticut. It began in 1976 with state funding, and serves 500 teachers in nine rural and small town districts. An initial needs assessment provided a basis for planning and responding to individual teachers' needs as well as producing regional programs. Inservice planning teams were established at every school in the region, with a RISE staff member acting as facilitator at meetings. One-shot workshops were the chief means of inservice until the limitations of such random and short term offerings were recognized. A transition point was reached in 1980 with a new district inservice format, involving small groups of teachers working together over a longer period of time, drawing increasingly on each other and their administrators instead of outside experts. Former teachers or local teachers on leave are employed by RISE to serve as consultant/advisers. A Teachers' Center Policy Board, a Superintendents' Advisory Council, and an Interdistrict Committee form the governance structure of RISE. (FG)

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Profile Of A Rural Teachers' Center

by PETER H. MARTIN

PROJECT RISE

Project RISE (Regional In-Service Education) is an inservice center serving teachers, administrators, support staff, and parents in the schools of east-central Connecticut. RISE, located on Halls Hill Road, Colchester, Connecticut 06415, currently serves approximately 500 teachers in thirteen schools within nine rural and small-town districts (Andover, Bozrah, Colchester, Franklin, Hebron, Lebanon, Marlborough, RHAM, and Salem). RISE is funded through local board of education assessments and federal and private foundation grants. Peter Martin, director of Project RISE, was formerly with the Center for Open Education at Storrs, Connecticut, has been a consultant to several Connecticut school systems, and was a teacher with the Hartford Public Schools. His original version of this paper "A Teachers' Center for Nine Rural Towns" was published in December 1977.

Our Beginnings

Project RISE (Regional In-Service Education) did not begin as a grassroots teacher movement. It began in 1976 when Robert Warren, an elementary school principal in Colchester, Connecticut, sat down with me to talk about how to provide more resources for teacher growth. I was not teaching at the time, but had been working for the school system for four years part-time as a resource teacher. Most of our teachers had never even heard of a teachers' center. Almost all were familiar with inservice workshops, but tended to view

them as a waste of valuable time. Since many boards of education in our primarily rural part of the state regard on-the-job professional renewal as a frill, even the chance to discuss the "growth opportunity" of inservice workshops was a major victory. After all, teachers go to college to learn to be teachers. Why should a town waste its resources on "teaching teachers who already know how to teach?"

Warren told me about a funding source for inservice education. He asked me to list the components of a good staff development program, and then helped me translate those components

into the kind of objectives that would be impressive in a grant proposal. My ideas came from my work as a teacher in Hartford, Connecticut; my experiences with many of the teachers' centers in the state; and my general perceptions of teachers' needs gained from working as an advisor in Colchester. We invited all interested teachers and administrators to come to a meeting to voice their ideas for establishing a regional staff development center. People came from five towns; a year later we expanded to nine towns; ideas were generated, and we scrambled to

(Continued on next page)

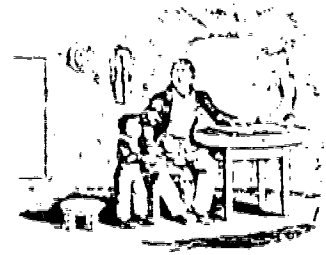
Meeting Face-to-Face to Assess Needs

The primary goal of the first Project RISE the partnership year was to identify and order the professional development needs of participating schools. We were first asked to help schools to plan and to plan workshops by topic. Then, through high regional cooperation, using the expertise of our first project evaluator, John Hagan, of the University of Connecticut, we designed an open-ended, face-to-face procedure to identify needs that occurred to teachers, principals, and superintendents. Teachers described their needs in round robin and chat group sessions were conducted with the staffs of each school while principals and superintendents were interviewed separately. Each group was asked "In order for Project RISE to be successful in aiding teachers' professional growth, what would have to happen?" The responses to this question were ranked according to importance by the participants at each school. Both individual school results and a regional composite were circulated for feedback.

Teacher-perceived needs included the following:

- curriculum development (updating or creating curriculum guides in the various disciplines--developing metrics curriculum, career education, science, social studies, language arts)
- curriculum implementation (individualizing instruction for the gifted, slow learner, learning disabled; fresh, meaningful activities for the rest of the

school)
- teacher-student and student-student interactions (better ways to handle behavior problems; develop our strengths, pride in themselves and their work; develop the school as a place where everyone can thrive)



- record-keeping and student evaluation (developing simple but effective record-keeping systems; developing honest student evaluations and consistent grading systems)
- teachers' professional and personal uplift (ways for "maintaining teacher sanity"; how to get published; increasing teachers' personal time; improving staff morale; increasing communication among staff; providing school time for sharing, brainstorming, and planning)
- teachers' relationships with the community (increasing parental participation and involvement; selling educational programs to the town; decreasing community criticism of the teaching profession)

This early assessment was a valuable starting point. It provided us with a knowledge of school-wide and system-wide needs that could be met through such activities as building-level workshops. But we needed something more. We needed ways to hear about individual requests that could be met individually. Our on-site advisors who regularly visit schools (described more fully later) became our instruments for personalized, informal needs assessment. (Presently, we are adding in-depth teacher interviews to our assessment repertoire.)

We also wanted a basis for planning region-wide programs that would draw teachers from several participating schools and towns. Our original needs assessment showed considerable overlap among the



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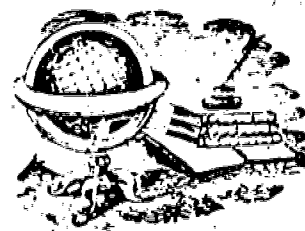
Program Planning: Turning Needs Lists into Workshop Calendars

But the RISE staff does not always address a need explicitly in its workshop topics. It does so in extreme hypothetical examples. Some teachers want a discipline program on better ways to punish students for misbehavior; the program we offer might instead advocate establishing a classroom climate and rules that promote student cooperation, mutual respect, and self-discipline.

So what good is an accurate needs assessment if we ignore it in program planning? We don't ignore it. To continue with our example, the needs assessment has told us that we cannot *begin* the program with the assumption that participants believe classroom climate-building is an effective discipline tool. Instead, we must begin with an examination of punishment and work our way toward climate-building. In other words, a useful needs assessment helps us to know "where teachers are at" when they come to a program, but our staff uses its judgment in determining where a program will go. I believe that kind of discretion must be exercised by teachers' center staff people who have exposure to enough different ideas, possibilities, teachers, and classrooms to have a broad perspective for interpreting what teachers say they need. Such a perspective sometimes makes it possible for center staff to draw a more precise design of how to address a common teaching problem than the teachers themselves can. However, the center staff are one or two steps removed from the realities of a particular classroom, so they may fail to appreciate fully the conditions from which a particular teacher expresses a need. It is obvious that give-and-take between teachers and center staff is vital. The center staff cannot ignore a teacher's problem and how he or she is likely to try solving it, but if a teachers' center is to be a place that stimulates new thinking about learning, that causes reflection and re-examination of old assumptions, that helps people to stretch themselves beyond their present conceptions, the teachers

The RISE staff always includes a discussion of the workshop topics in the needs assessment that comes from the needs assessment. A recent example: John Coe, chief primary advisory of Oxfordshire, England, an articulate, stimulating advocate of child-centered education, was to be in the state, and we asked him to conduct an after-school program at RISE for teachers, administrators, and board of education members. Our constituency had not requested such a program, but Coe's workshop stimulated a great deal of questioning and re-examining of our current teaching practices. Consequently, the participants are now asking for more, and we are exploring the possibility of a summer follow-up program at RISE and perhaps a trip to England to view the schools our English guest so eloquently described.

Clearly, a needs assessment provides only the beginning points for programs. A teachers' center that enriches, stretches, and stimulates teachers may need to expand and elaborate on the needs assessment's themes.



An Inservice Planning Team for Every School

After the initial needs assessment, our next step in the development of RISE was to establish inservice planning teams at every school in the region. These teams were (and are) composed of the school principal and teacher volunteers from each grade level or grade cluster, with a Project RISE staff member acting as a facilitator at most planning team meetings. During

the planning year, the task of the teams was to review the results of the needs assessment and cooperatively design school-based programs. The teams also shared programs appropriate for town-wide dissemination. In many cases this was the first opportunity teachers had to make decisions about their inservice, and the teacher involvement was somewhat uncomfortable for a number of the principals. Some of the discomfort also stemmed from the fact that at early meetings there were no clear cut guidelines or expectations for the operation of the teams.



Thus, the facilitator role of the Project RISE staff member was a delicate one. We wanted principals to come away from the meetings without feeling railroaded; their support and personal commitment were needed so that inservice days could be provided for the programs that teams generated. At the same time, it was essential to encourage teachers to be open, launch suggestions, and make real decisions.

At one planning team meeting there were long periods of silence when the teachers were unwilling to take the first step. The RISE facilitator and the principal resisted the temptation to step in and take over. Finally, some of the teachers began to share their ideas, perhaps simply to break the awkward silence. At the end of the session one teacher said to me in a quiet, almost apologetic voice, "You know, Peter, teachers aren't used to making decisions like this; this is going to take some getting used to." In contrast, meetings at another school had the flavor of a bargaining unit at contract time, with vociferous teachers sometimes making it difficult for the principal to get a word in edgewise. At still other meetings (all too few), it was obvious that the teachers and principal had previously established a cooperative relationship, and we could immediately get to the business at hand.

Most schools have three to five planning team meetings a year on after-school time when the school needs assessment results are defined, refined, and translated into programs for which several inservice half-days per year are provided. All the districts in RISE schedule inservice on the same days. All programs in all towns are listed on the RISE calendar and are open to the teachers of any school. Thus, teachers have a far greater choice of activities than small districts could offer individually, and the programs are still generated by local teachers.

Our planning year model was made quite interesting in 1980-81 when inservice workshops took over. These were a source of pride for the planning team leaders who saw many of their ideas become real activities. All workshops clearly reflected their design and participant faculty. As one teacher observed, "You don't get enough time in a workshop to do any good; one or two-shot workshops have to be practical or they're wasted."

Gradually, a few schools left Phase Two; schools began to move away from the one-shot workshop format. Some planning teams worked on topics that continued over four to six months, using several inservice days, released time for off-site visits, interaction with the topic, and after-school gatherings in order to explore topics in depth.

Workshop Junkies: A Period of Withdrawal

At last, the limitations of a random potpourri of two-hour, one-shot offerings on inservice half-days are generally recognized. Lack of follow-up, shallowness, inability to meet a wide range of needs with a single program are but a few of the problems increasingly observed by participating teachers and administrators. RISE remains responsible for helping plan the majority of district-sponsored inservice half-day programming in our towns as well as for the voluntary programs that emanate from the RISE teachers' center. We're encouraged to see that the more individualized programming at the teachers' center is having an impact on the local district inservice. I believe the success of the teachers' center part of RISE gives our districts a new vision of what meaningful professional development can be.

In 1980-81 our new district inservice format will involve small groups of teachers working together over time primarily at the building level, but with some cross-overs when appropriate. Some groups will work on a district or building priority; others will pursue a need perceived by the group itself; all will draw more and more upon the resources of our own teachers and administrators. People who are exploring a topic in-depth over several inservice half-days (and at other times), using a variety of avenues for learning and sharing internal strengths, will come to be resources for teachers in other participating districts who wish to pursue aspects of the same topic. In effect, we are gradually weaning ourselves away from an over-dependence on outside experts to solve our problems through an assortment of two-hour extravaganzas.

It has taken us four years to reach this transition point. It is important to understand that in our rural and small-town area, the advent of a variety of inservice half-day programs, often conducted by high-powered outside consultants, was viewed as the ultimate

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Consultant Advisors: School Dollars Well Spent

For three years we have operated an advisory system, employing 100 or more teachers and area teachers on leaves of absence who become paid members of the RISE staff. Because of our funding fluctuations, as few as three half-time people and as many as three part-time and two full-time staff have been classroom advisors in a given year visiting each school approximately one-half day per week (we wish it could be more or on a request basis). Advisors are key people



in fostering a continual on-the-spot kind of needs assessment, as well as serving as needs-fulfillers informally and non-evaluatively. I believe our consultant advisors are essential to RISE success. These are the people who help build egos. They help ensure that large-group workshops grow from real needs, and that the workshops are followed by personalized, in-classroom assistance when needed. Working with principals, the consultant advisors also foster buddy system approaches, set up work groups, curriculum study groups, and other in-school growth activities. They conduct mini-workshops in their areas of expertise and encourage teachers in each school to do likewise.

Because they serve more than one school and meet weekly with advisors serving all the other schools, our advisors are able to arrange for inter-town classroom visitations and idea exchanges based on one teacher's need and another's strength. This is extremely important in our towns, which are predominantly single-school systems and therefore tend to be

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For those who are contemplating the creation of a total teacher growth system, I cannot think of a more important element than the consultant advisor. But the expensive I have seen teachers scrounge for the "scrounged" space, use scrounged materials, and do unbelievable things on a shoestring budget, but I have never seen a center with scrounged advisors. Good people cost money, which many school systems seem unwilling to provide.

Frankly, without federal and foundation dollars we would be unable to support our advisory service as it is currently defined. Title IV-C funds made our advisory possible, federal Teacher Centers Program and private foundation funds saved it from extinction, and we aren't certain how to keep it alive in the future. The remainder of our budget is bare-bones by most anyone's standards and we have no "fat" to cut from our basic operating costs to support advisory personnel. A single full-time advisor costs as much as our entire workshop, substitute, and materials budgets put together. (In 1980-81, a full-time advisor's salary is \$14,500—the rough equivalent of a fifth-year teacher with a Master's degree in this area.) Also, results are not immediately seen. It takes years for schools to learn to use an advisor appropriately and fully, as well as for an advisor to learn how to encourage, assist, and challenge teachers.

I am hard-pressed to imagine a rural teachers' center working effectively without the advisors linking its population of teachers sparsely distributed over a wide area. Getting services to the people is a key to our success, and there appear to be few alternatives open to us. In fact, the cost of a mobile unit is even higher than an advisory system. Let's face it, our advisors give us the greatest opportunity to effect long-lasting improvement in classroom teaching; they're worth their price.

One Teachers' Center Serving Nine Districts

In summer 1977 we began to develop a place for teachers to work together that would give physical reality to our regional teachers' center concept. Teachers spent three weeks with me in July planning the initial design and construction work, receiving

single teacher's room, and the only room for the executive director, his secretary, and a few other staff members in the tiny room. The square foot of empty space that we could have possibly made use of by making use of the teachers' center out of this "labeled room" in these works.

We did. In fact, we have since outgrown our one-room space and spilled over into a very small attached room. Unfortunately, there is no opportunity for consistent use of other rooms at our present location. To illustrate, when space had almost been reached on the proportions of the resident one-day last year when a one-day creative/dramatics workshop was held, the participants, our teachers, and the participants were having the secretary was typing, four teachers returning from their schools were looking for a place to do their follow-up work, two teachers dropped in to look up materials and use the laminator, the center director was hiding in a corner to concentrate on writing a life-or-death grant, and the drama workshop participants were dashing about the room raising the gestures and sounds of wild animals. I will never forget the expression on our secretary/bookkeeper/organizer's face (Shirley Peterson was in her first few months with RISE after leaving her position as executive secretary with a respected business firm as she answered the phones, simultaneously and miraculously typing when a workshop participant flew over to her desk, perched on the edge, and began to flap her arms and cluck like a chicken. At this moment, Martha, the lunch-count-taker, entered the room and bellowed out, "Sloppy Joe's on a hard roll or tuna plate!" nearly drowning out the school intercom announcement that grade reports were due in the principal's office at three o'clock.

Obviously, we are working under less than ideal conditions which hamper the productivity of both staff and teacher participants. But we are in a fine school with live children and teachers in a system with one of the highest "tax effort for education" ratios in the state, where the community strives for quality education on a low tax base. In such a setting it is impossible for us to forget the reasons for our existence and the significance of our work.

Formal Curriculum Development: At Last

Curriculum development appeared as a major need in our original needs assessment, and for good reason. Our towns are too small and underfinanced to keep anyone on their staffs specifically to mind the curriculum development store. Consequently, we have a haphazard mishmash in many curricular areas: few goals, poor articulation through the grades, and an independence on single texts. Where no series of

texts that spans the grades is available, as is the case in the case of social studies and math in some towns. There may be no guidelines at all.

Originally, we planned to have curriculum development take place regionally first. The RISE staff would help develop skeleton curricula which would then be fleshed out by teachers and administrators in the local districts. I should have known from my rural Maine upbringing that small, merely independent districts would not swallow the idea of a regional approach to curriculum development. At a superintendent's Advisory Council meeting in our first operational year, the RISE regional curriculum proposal was soundly defeated.

This year, however, the superintendent of one of our participating school systems asked RISE to develop a process by which a district could accomplish K-12 curriculum articulation and development with the benefit of the curriculum specialists and coordinators who serve the larger, more affluent districts. Finally, we have been asked, and having been asked, I quake in my boots. This is a challenge of the greatest magnitude. Our center is in a position to affect significantly core curricula. Can we rise to the occasion?



We had better. To fail to respond to this request is to relinquish a major opportunity for our center. We now have a chance to go beyond a barrage of workshops and courses that, although they may deeply affect individual teachers, do not influence the entire school system. But how do we plan a teacher-involving, practical curriculum development process? How do we avoid the familiar dead-end, long hours contributed by a few motivated and highly-skilled teachers, resulting in an impressive paper curriculum for the "elite"—a fat and awesome guide which pleases administrators and boards of education but which molds on the classroom shelves of most teachers?

Raising the Role of RISE in Teacher Evaluation

Teachers and administrators in our area still have not made a strong link between staff development and teacher evaluation. The two exist side by side, almost independent of one another. I reject the notion that

the primary reason teachers become involved in teachers' center activities is to complete their formal evaluation processes and growth objectives. However, something is awry if the teachers' center programs, which are based primarily on teachers' requests, have little bearing on their professional objectives as determined in the teacher evaluation process.

When a teacher was asked by one of our staff if RISE could assist with her evaluation objectives, she replied, "Oh, those things! To tell you the truth, I have no objectives. I am completely lost without a classroom and time to take to play games, but this teacher evaluation thing is pretty much of a joke. You know, I am going with you, but I don't think I even take it very seriously."

Almost at the same breath, the teacher asked to be signed up for a two-week summer program at the teachers' center, operating learning centers in the primary classroom, offered without credit or any other incentives. "Is the program in any way related to your objectives?" she and her principal had agreed upon as part of her evaluation plan? No. Was this teacher interested in professional improvement? Based upon her desire to give up two weeks of summer vacation for a non-credit course, I think the answer would be yes. Too many teachers choose the "smoke screen" approach to setting their formal objectives while working on their "real" needs apart from the evaluation process.

Our advisors have been asked by principals on a few occasions to assist them in completing a teacher evaluation report. In some cases, our advisors may spend more time in the classroom of a particular teacher than does the principal. We have declined in all cases, explaining that the role of the advisor is that of a teacher helper and supporter, and that the success of this partnership depends greatly on the mutual trust that builds between the two. This trust would be shattered if the advisor were to contribute the results of classroom observations to evaluation reports.

We are not comfortable, however, if we ignore our potential for helping bridge the gap between teacher evaluation and teacher professional growth. One approach we take is to encourage greater administrator participation in teachers' programs. We believe that if the school principal is to be a helpful contributor in setting meaningful professional growth objectives with faculty members, he or she must know a great deal about the teaching/learning process and spend enough time in classrooms to understand teachers' needs first hand. Even though the paperwork and management of a school can be all-consuming, we want to give our principals every excuse we can think of to be active in curriculum and instruction. All administrators in our districts have a standing invitation to attend any program for teachers, but we made

the effort to recruit their participation into the program conducted by the largest advisor, John C. F. In this case, we sent special invitations to each administrator. To our great pleasure, twenty-five percent of those in attendance were administrators, and they can now support their teachers' endeavor to implement some of their ideas. In fact, we will invite them to return for the follow-up activities we are planning because if both teacher and principal are present for a program, it is far more likely to serve as a stimulus for "writing meaningful growth objectives" for the teacher evaluation process.

University and College Involvement: Not Yet

Our teachers' center exists because we serve needs that universities and colleges have left unserved. Since they have greater flexibility and more resources, the state university and a state college, which are reasonably close to our towns, might do much of what we do, but the fact is they have not.

RISE attends to needs that local educators say are important. If we stray too far in our programming, we lose the teachers who voluntarily attend our programs. We lose the local dollars that help support our work. Universities and colleges avoid this local accountability because of their state funding and because they do the bulk of their work within the safety of their ivy covered walls.

Yet it is these same walls that help to create an environment conducive to research, study, and the potential for initiation and experimentation that local school systems, buffeted by intense pressures coming from all sides, usually can't afford. It is hard for the teachers' center, based in the local school system, to create an environment that helps teachers think beyond a simple reaction to the immediate pressures of classroom teaching, but universities and colleges should have a greater capability to help teachers do this. Professors dedicate their careers to deliberate, painstaking, unpressured research and thought. It is not their obligation but their opportunity to pursue research into teaching questions with teachers. Teachers' centers appear to be more able to deal with immediate concerns and issues that have direct, obvious, local classroom applicability. This is an oversimplified division of roles, but I think we complement each others' work; there are few areas where the threat of competition genuinely exists; and we must cooperate to take advantage of each others' strengths.

To date, RISE has failed to find a way effectively to make this case and to provide enticing opportunities for joint efforts. It has been a nightmare trying to get our programs accredited by these institutions, and it costs an arm and a leg to interest them in providing

For the purpose of this study, the *W. b. sensu lato* group was divided into two subgroups: *W. b. sensu stricto* and *W. b. sensu lato* (excluding *W. b. sensu stricto*). The *W. b. sensu stricto* group was further divided into *W. b. sensu stricto* and *W. b. sensu stricto* (excluding *W. b. sensu stricto*). The *W. b. sensu lato* group was further divided into *W. b. sensu lato* (excluding *W. b. sensu stricto*) and *W. b. sensu lato* (excluding *W. b. sensu stricto*).

Before preparing to apply for federal teacher center funds, teacher center development was in the form of a Teacher Advisory Council which made recommendations to the Superintendents. Advisory Councils all under the Interdistrict Committee. In essence, the Teacher Advisory Council became the Teachers' Center Policy Board with expanded authority in accordance with federal regulations administering the federal teacher center grant program. We owe a great debt to the federal program—it gave our superintendents and committee a legally sanctioned reason for real teacher governance of the teachers' center."

Under the old governance structure there was never a recommendation from the Teacher Advisory Council that was rejected by the superintendents' council: a tribute both to the soundness of the teacher recommendations and the desire of the superintendents to create a service for teachers that would be responsive to their needs. But it was time to take a more active role—to learn about establishing sound

need for positive reinforcement, humility, a good self-image, good salesmanship skills, high motivation, adaptability, self-confidence, sensitivity, empathy, good listening skills, a strong back, and lots of trunk space in a runs-in-all-weather car. I'm not suggesting that all advisors possess all of these skills since none of us is the necessary cross between Wonder Woman, Superman, Buddha, and the Rock of Gibraltar, but the need for a lot of these skills surfaces at one time or another during the job.

the teachers aren't really sure what you're doing on their turf. You may spend a lot of frustrated time in the teachers' lounge trying to get something started. You may be scattering your energies, fulfilling strange requests, and wondering how you ever got into this line of work. Energy levels are high but job satisfaction is low because you just don't seem to be making any inroads.

As winter approaches and the weather grows bleaker, so grows your mood. Work is punctuated by frequent trips to the Colchester Bakery for a fattening confection—just a little pick-me-up to bolster sagging spirits. I reached my lowest point at the end of November. I felt like a missionary without a mission and dreaded going out into the schools just as I was sure they dreaded my coming. I was ready to quit and go into hiding, but sought solace and security at the RISE Center since at

$$f = \text{const} = 0.17 \text{ sec}^{-1} \text{ for } \lambda = 1.4 \text{ cm}.$$

people who have spent a lot of nights and sleepless days wondering if they can take care of teachers' needs.

Valuing Practical As Well As Philosophical Styles

When teachers are asked to do a workshop or any other type of professional training many of them, on the first day, participate in "brain-stroke" sessions: they are told how to do it the next morning. If they can, they make a connection between the sessions and what is happening in the room with opportunity, why are they here, how are they changing. The opportunity to participate in these sessions, the companies, those times when the teachers work with us, is a site to offer chances for change and change.

I wonder about teachers' center people who say their center has progressed beyond the "what to do on Monday" syndrome. Does this statement imply that all the problems that were no longer worth doing on Monday and children's faces nor feel a sense of urgency in their work? Or does the statement indicate that the center staff members themselves have evolved to a higher plane simply because they are several steps removed from the urgency of the classroom? I believe that at least some of the teachers must still be worried about Monday, even though others may well have moved beyond.

Maybe there is a hierarchy of teacher needs. As with Maslow's hierarchy, the first level must be satisfied before the others can even be considered. Certainly the need to have a self-directed, self-paced approach

to doing a person would be at the first level. The next level might go beyond the need to feel successful as a teacher on terms established by the educational community, by fellow teachers, principal, children, parents. A third level would perhaps include a need to feel successful as a teacher on terms established within oneself.

Needs at the first level, relating to teacher as successful person, can be continually met through encouraging the individual to share special talents, both with the children and with fellow teachers, through meeting teachers on their own terms, and through such reinforcement as praising, rewarding, or affirming. Satisfying these basic needs never ends.

The "make-and-take" workshops. Meaningful programs provide meaningful services for people with needs at the second level. They can help the teacher feel successful on terms defined by the school (e.g., having enough activities to keep five reading groups going, making sense out of the Elementary Science Study program, having colorful bulletin boards and a bag of tricks for classroom control). Once teachers begin to feel successful on the school's terms, it is possible for them to move beyond the urgency of Monday. Since survival is no longer a question, that kind of frantic mindlessness can gradually subside. New ideas and suggestions don't seem so threatening and criticism can be handled more easily; therefore, long-range planning and more profound thinking have a chance to take place.

Enter the Stage Two program for people with needs at the third level. These programs recognize that some make-and-take work with materials will continue to be important to teachers, but they may be

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least more people liked me. It was a rough time, but lucky, it didn't last too long.

Something happened, and I'm not sure what it was. It is odd, but my finger on it I might be able to make other advisors come easier. Maybe I re-evaluated my role and my expectations. Maybe the teachers simply started to recognize me and realized I wasn't going to go away. Maybe I just kept hanging in long enough. Maybe it was magic. More likely it was a combination of all of these and more, but slowly, almost imperceptibly, things started getting easier. Teachers started smiling and saying hello when I walked into the building of public educators, the Teachers' Room. I stopped dreading my visits to the schools and, in fact, found extra excitement going out. I started feeling that I had some friends out there, but most importantly I felt

that people were using me as a resource, and my time and energy were being spent in a worthwhile, productive pursuit.

Now it's spring and the earth is growing. The schools are humming with end-of-the-year activities and things are slowing down for me. I've put on about ten pounds from those frequent trips to the Colchester Bakery but I've gained immeasurable experience.

It seems like the blink of an eye since I first walked into RISE, and now in the blink of another eye I will be walking out. I'll take with me a lot of laughs and a lot of good experiences, a lot of frustrations and a lot of hopes. My hopes are that the person who takes my place next year will find the job a little easier because I was here this year. My regrets are that spending only one year doing the work of an

[illegible]

Still, I have a sense of satisfaction. My skills and experience have been used by teachers who will in turn pass their skills and experiences on to other teachers and students. A successful advisor helps create this cycle of learning and, presumably, works him or herself out of a job by helping people realize that they are their own best resources and don't really need an advisor at all. I hope to have planted this seed in my schools this year. Nurturing and time will tell if it grows.

This is my third year as an advisor with Project RISE and the third consecutive year that I have

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worked with of particular elementary school. It is from this school that the following perceptions are taken:

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total operating budget for the past two years, including administrative overhead. Since RISE, actually, services approximately 620 people in a given year (500 teachers, an average of 22 administrators and board of education members, and 100 parents), the current level of service costs about \$184 per person served.

In an urban area where a greater centralization of service is possible, the same degree of service could no doubt be provided for considerably less. But we must go where the people are, and this costs money.

Considering the intense level of service provided, \$184 seems very modest. However, in terms of long-term survival, our population base cannot support the cost of our present level of effort. Our local districts currently contribute \$32 per person. The remainder comes from federal, state, and private foundation grants. Conceivably, our districts might be able to raise their contribution level to \$45 or \$50 per person served, but our small, low tax-based towns really could not do much better than that under current school financing methods. This means that RISE would need to raise three dollars for every one dollar contributed by the districts in order to maintain the present intensity of service. Can we continue to do it?

Grant sources seem to be drying up with the federal government's inflation-fighting cutbacks; private foundation funds are difficult to obtain and those dollars don't last. It is clear that we must begin to look beyond the grant scene for survival. Currently, we face an "opportunity" to become an active part of a state educational service center. As nearly as we can determine right now, our service area would triple but our level of actual financial resources would remain

about the same or decrease. Moreover, there is a high likelihood that, in the interest of cost effectiveness, the resources of our physical center would eventually have to be consolidated in a location central to the enlarged service area but too far from our present towns to provide the kind of service we now offer. If this happened, our towns once again would find themselves on the fringes of a service area and the original justification for our current location would be disregarded.

Would dispersal and watered-down services be more "cost-effective"? We couldn't possibly know our teachers by name. We couldn't possibly understand the dynamics of each school and the politics and characteristics of all the towns we would serve. We couldn't possibly make our programs grow from local circumstances and people. Our governing boards would be expanded to such an extent that no one individual or town would be able to exert enough of an influence to make the service truly locally responsive. We would lose the sense of ownership and commitment our governing boards now enjoy, which is critical to our local accountability. We would, by design, have to become less personal, more formal, and more bureaucratic. However, our chances of long-term survival would be quite good.

I'm not convinced that this kind of survival is worth the trade-offs. The very reasons for our existence, those which have made us successful and valuable, would very likely be lost to cost-effectiveness. Therefore, we must find other routes to survival. If large-scale expansion is not the answer, what is?

An approach we will try next year is to expand our base by opening certain locally-requested programs

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As the degree and kind of teacher-advisor interactions increase, the advisor's role begins to acquire shape and substance. One teacher wrote, "It takes the school advisor a great deal of time to become part of the school system. After three years, the teachers in this building have grown through their association with the advisor. His first year was one of building trust and becoming part of the staff." Another teacher noted, "By the end of the advisor's first year I was ready, relaxed, and clear enough about his role to utilize it."

It does take considerable time to build up trust with teachers and to establish interpersonal relationships. The process of bringing this about, which requires patience, perseverance, compassion, and a multitude of other saintly qualities, is frequently filled with frustrating and unsatisfying experi-

ences. It is not uncommon to feel that you are just spinning your wheels, accomplishing little. However, you are laying the necessary foundations for meaningful relationships, and the time spent doing this is important. Regrettably, the year may end before you see enough evidence to feel that your year was successful.

As a result, I have articulated the following strategies that a new advisor might consider using:

1. Get to know the pivotal teachers in each school that you are serving as quickly as possible. These are people who often have taught for a while and whose opinions are highly regarded by other staff members. They also frequently control the flow of messages in a building. Communication about you and your role will spread more rapidly through them.

to those outside the RISE area for a fee, hoping to generate enough income to substantially reduce the cost of a program for our own people. We hope to use more and more of our own teachers and administrators as workshop leaders, and to invest in training a few of our people by outside consultants in a given need area so that these people can then train others. We hope to work out bartering and exchanges with other teachers' centers and organizations. For example, we'd provide two outside teachers with free room, board, and attendance at one of our training programs. In return, two of our people would receive free training at another center's program. (We have discovered fund-raising efforts such as placing ads in newspapers for donations and holding lotteries, but I feel strongly that we should not have to stoop to this level to provide a needed educational service. My stomach begins to churn when discussing such possibilities.)

In any event, while none of the above ideas are original, many are new to us and some deserve a try. Other possibilities will be generated by our staff, policy board, Interdistrict Committee, and superintendents' advisory in brainstorming sessions next year. I firmly believe that we have the will and that there are ways not only to survive but to survive on our own terms. The test of this conviction is just around the corner.

A Dream for the Future

Who can dream of grand things when merely maintaining our existing program will be difficult? To me,

it's the only way to go. Understandably, many programs and institutions retreat and adopt defensive postures under financial pressures, but this only makes it harder for them to justify their continued existence.

My dream has come in pieces from many places and people over the past year. First, we need more space for the teachers' center, and I envision in my dream four interconnected rooms: a recycle construction room, a lecture/workshop room, a professional library, and quiet area, and a room for our offices and fully-equipped kitchen. For many centers this part of the dream is a reality.



But we can't stop there. In the dream I see a room for satellite-beamed television with video equipment and computer terminals tying our relatively isolated area to the rest of the world's people and information.

I see a small experimental alternative school where every five years teachers and administrators from our participating districts might work for a year in a new situation with stimulating people. I see the lab school providing a site for university and college field work, acting as a meeting ground for local educators and those from institutions of higher education.

2. If you are working in an elementary school, it has been my experience that primary grade teachers are the most consistently receptive and enthusiastic. It was this group of teachers who made my first-year advisory work meaningful, even though my teaching experience had been in seventh and eighth grades.
3. Seek out teachers who have experiences/interests in grade levels or content areas similar to yours. When advisors and teachers share similar concerns and interests, the chances are better for effective communication. The majority of my in-depth advisory work was with teachers who, like myself, were interested in science and mathematics.
4. Another population to tap is teachers new to

the profession or new to a school. Since both the first-year advisor and "new" teacher are in a similar situation, empathy exists that can be the groundwork for establishing a relationship.

5. Participate in social or other activities where you can get to know teachers more personally. The importance of knowing an advisor as a person is seen in the following teacher comments: "A relationship between advisor and staff can only grow through dedication and informal knowledge of the person." . . . "(The advisor) has made his position more than advice-giver or recommender or authority, but as a position of personal concern for our staff." . . . "He is invited to all school functions, both professional and social. We consider him part of our staff."

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I see a center that would encourage people of all ages and walks of life to be continual learners. I see a center that would be a cultural educational resource for everyone in the communities we serve. I see a center for young and old to learn about and participate in the arts—a center equipped with an art gallery, music, art, and craft studios, and a theater for the culminating performances of burgeoning small community drama and arts groups. I see cultural and ethnic exchanges of performances, art works, and ideas between local groups and similar groups in the major cities, thereby helping to offset our rural young peoples' (and adults') limited exposure to those of very different backgrounds. This would positively prepare students for the differences they'll encounter when they leave our towns to find new lives and work in the cities.

I see a center that would help the people of our communities—both children and adults—explore and appreciate our natural environment, which is rapidly being spoiled, the historical richness of our small communities, and our own heritage and rural roots. I see a center that would help parents to be the morals and values educators, the disciplinarians, and the sex and drug advisors of their own children, freeing the school teachers of these seemingly misplaced burdens.

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6. Establish a consistent pattern for school visitations and stick to it. Teachers live by bells, schedules, and the ticks of a clock. If teachers know when and where the advisor is expected, they can make arrangements for contacting him or her. One teacher, expressing her feelings and those of several colleagues wrote, "Because (the advisor's) visits were always on the same days, people began to be able to plan their time in order to talk and ask for materials. People know when he will be coming and know they can discuss methods as well as materials with him."

These strategies should not be interpreted as attempts to force closure on the advisor's role, but as ways to establish common ground between advisors and teachers from which other arrangements can grow over time.

I see a center that will link all kinds of people and the communities they live in. I see a center that will be a haven for long-range planners who want to see the future, not just orderly growth for rural and suburban towns, communities, growth that would preserve the strengths without reactionary, ignorant ignorance of this technological, global, increasingly interconnected society.

Finally, I envision a building to house all of these dreams. A home built of native oak from the saw mill at Amston, of stone from the farmers' fields. A home for ideas, teaching, learning, and research designed with the help of students in our high schools and built by the people in our communities. I see the people entering the lobby of this structure and proudly reading on the oak entry their names and their contributions of time, labor, ideas, and support.

I see hundreds of names, but they begin to fade as Monday morning approaches. I awaken fully, put my dream under my pillow, pull on a sweater to cover my no-time-to-iron shirt with its button missing, hop in my pick-up, and head for work at our one-room teachers' center at the Halls Hill School, Colchester, Connecticut, remembering as I drive that our present one-room reality was itself a dream just four years ago.



After three years of advisory work in one elementary school, the depth and breadth of my role have grown considerably. This year, the kind and frequency of interactions with teachers have noticeably increased. The bonds of trust and confidence that took so long to establish have made it possible for me to become involved in several in-depth classroom curriculum projects with teachers and students.

The following examples indicate the substance of that work. For more than three months I have been team-teaching a science unit with a third-grade teacher. This unit, part of the third-grade science curriculum, is laboratory-centered and inquiry-oriented. Thus, it requires a different set of teaching strategies, such as questioning techniques and evaluation procedures, and an untraditional set

PUBLICATIONS

Teachers' Centers Exchange

DIRECTORY 1980

Teachers' Centers Exchange Directory—1980

This directory provides a comprehensive listing of teachers' centers in the United States and Canada. It includes information about the centers' programs, services, and contact information. The directory is organized alphabetically by state and province. It also includes a section on the work of teacher educators and a section on the exchange as an information center and communications facilitator. Descriptions in this volume highlight each center's programs, needs assessment, evaluation, sources of staff, setting, participation fees and credit, affiliation, support, and decision making. July, 1980. 348 pp. \$12.50 prepaid from Order Department, Far West Laboratory, 1855 Folsom Street, San Francisco, California 94103.

Essays on Teachers' Centers, edited by Kathleen Devaney, is a collection of twelve essays about inservice experiences that engage teachers' talents and energies while offering intellectual and emotive stimulation and support. Articles are included on the role of the in-classroom advisor, teacher design of classroom curriculum, and discussions of the varied learning principles underlying teachers' center development and practice. Contributors are Maja Apelman, Sharon Feiman, William Fikins, Lilian Katz, Robert Mar, Theodore Manolakes, Anthony McLaughlin, Thomas O'Brien, Adelaide Sproul, and L. C. Taylor. The writings were gathered during 1976 from educators in and around teachers' centers in the United States and England. A selected, annotated bibliography is provided. 199 pp. \$10.00 prepaid. Order Department, Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1855 Folsom Street, San Francisco, California 94103. California residents add sales tax.

ESSAYS ON TEACHERS' CENTERS



of learning strategies, such as observing, predicting, and communicating. Since I have had prior experiences with similar science units, we agreed that I would serve as a role model by teaching two of the four groups in the class. During this time the teacher observed, took notes, asked questions, and on the following days taught the other two groups. Periodically, we have switched groups so that each of us has had an opportunity to work with every student. Students are required to keep notebooks and record their data. Thus far, feedback of learner progress has consisted primarily of conversations with students about experiments and data in their record books. Although we have not yet completed the unit, the teacher has expressed that she now has enough confidence to teach it next fall. At the same time, I have been working with another third-

grade teacher in similar fashion, with comparable results.

More recently, I have assisted two staff members with the purposes and uses of a variety of math lab materials. Initially, I discussed the materials with them, and I am now conducting a series of demonstration lessons with gifted mathematics students of grades K-3. This approach seems to be particularly useful because these teachers are observing how to use and adapt such materials for children of different ages and abilities. One teacher, expressing what others have indicated, wrote, "In addition to support, ideas, and resources, our advisor has added a continuity to our learning process. Relationships do not develop instantly, and this continuity over a period of years provides the time and proximity for meaningful working relationships."

PUBLICATIONS

BUILDING A TEACHERS' CENTER



Building a Teachers' Center, edited by Kathleen Dryden, is a collection of 16 articles that give first hand accounts from teachers' center leaders of aspects involved in starting a teachers' center. In some of these articles, additional material has been inserted from the Proceedings of Workshops - small conferences of teachers' center leaders, which the Exchange has sponsored since 1977. Thus the book represents the substance, grassroots experience, and the style, self-reflection and voluntary sharing with others, of the teachers' centers network. The book begins with two papers that relate how a combination of convictions, experience, high energy, and happenstance formed the first American teachers' centers. Following are several essays on practical matters: staffing, needs assessment, evaluation, space, programming, workshops, advising, managing, budget, advisory board, funding, and self-publishing. Finally, three articles are provided on centers' relationships with school districts and with parents and community. \$9.70 prepaid. Order from Teachers College Press, 1234 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, New York 10027.

- **Occasional Paper No. 1, *Moving Teachers' Centers from Grassroots Beginnings to Federal Support***, by Kathleen Dryden. Second edition July 1980. ERIC ID 151-352. Occasional Papers available from Teachers' Centers Exchange, Far West Laboratory, 1855 Folsom Street, San Francisco, California 94103. 1-25 copies free; 26 or more copies, \$3.00 per copy.
- **Occasional Paper No. 3, *From On-site and In-house to Off-site Teachers' Centers: A Case Study***, by Gretchen Thomas. July 1979. ERIC ID 167-070.
- **Occasional Paper No. 4, *Starting a Teachers' Center: A Report on the Process with an Appendix***, by Ann at the San Jose. September 1978. ERIC ID 167-022.
- **Occasional Paper No. 5, *A Distinctive Opportunity: The Teachers' Center Meets Individual Needs and Institutional Goals***, by Amy P. Buxton. June 1979. ERIC ID 175-852.
- **Occasional Paper No. 6, *The Advisor: An Essay from Teachers' Center to Classroom***, by Gretchen Thomas. October 1979. ERIC ID 182-312.
- **Occasional Paper No. 7, *Writings from the Network***, an annotated bibliography of publications of interest to people in teachers' centers or similar forms of staff development. October 1980.
- **Occasional Paper No. 8, *Starting Out, Moving On, Running Ahead Or How the Teachers' Center Can Attend to Stages in Teachers' Development***, by Heidi Watts. October 1980.

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